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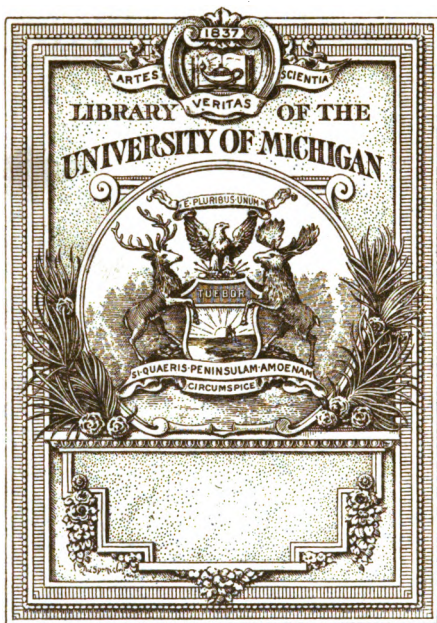
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IN HIS STEPS

A Religious Drama



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IN HIS STEPS

A Dramatic Adaptation of the Story

BY

CHARLES M. SHELDON

AND

FRANK H. LANE

All acting rights, both professional and amateur, are reserved.
Permission for performing this Drama must be
obtained from the Authors.

All correspondence should be made with Professor F. H. Lane,
University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pa.

One copy 25 cents; Twenty copies \$5.00

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INTRODUCTORY PREFACE TO DRAMATIZATION.

This dramatized version of *In His Steps* is based upon the version which was used for the first time in my own church here in Topeka, December 19-20, 1910. It has been made under my direction and by my authority by Professor F. H. Lane of the Department of Dramatic Art in Washburn College. The dramatization follows almost literally the original story of *In His Steps* as first written. The changes which have been made are all of them minor adaptations to the dramatic need. It is my earnest conviction that this dramatization can be successfully used by any earnest group of Christian young people in the churches, the Christian associations, colleges or Endeavor societies. Before presenting the drama, those who intend using it are asked to read carefully the note of directions printed by Professor Lane. A careful reading of these directions will help very materially in presenting the drama in the proper way. This is not intended to be in the nature of a mere entertainment but is what it purports to be, a religious dramatization of a story with a purpose; and those who enter into it both as actors and listeners should bear this in mind. The expense of presenting the drama is nominal. It can be put upon the platform of any church auditorium or upon any stage without the ordinary stage settings. It was first given in my own church without curtain, scenery, or costume of any kind in the way of professional equipment. The entire expense need not exceed ten or fifteen dollars. It is my earnest wish that the use of this drama may promote an earnest Christian desire on the part of those who have anything to do with it to make more of their Christian lives in the actual service of the Master. This adaptation is fully authorized by me as the only dramatization which has been made under my own supervision.

CHARLES M. SHELDON,
Central Church, Topeka, Kansas.

NOTE ON THE PLAY.

When *In His Steps* was given in Topeka, the pulpit platform was enlarged, steps leading down from each side; curtains, footlights and scenery were not used; only the most necessary articles of furniture were put on the stage. When a curtain seemed necessary the lights were lowered. The play may still be given in the same way.

In the present edition the description of stage, entrances, etc., presupposes stage properties. Of course if the play is to be given on the pulpit platform, modification may be necessary.

The prologue and epilogue are scenes taken from the first presentation, and were put on in the following manner:

The first three or four rows of seats in the middle of the church are reserved for the audience of actors. These seats, pulpit and choir loft are the settings for the scenes. The lights are lowered, while the audience, minister, and choir take their places. When the lights are turned on, the audience is seated, the minister standing in the pulpit and the choir in place. The funeral scene was put on in the same way. At the close of the third act, Loreen remains on the stretcher. While the lights are low, a drapery is thrown over Loreen, the chairs are arranged, the pledge-takers, except Powers, seat themselves, and the friends of Loreen, with shawls, sometimes over their heads as foreign women wear them in our cities, file into the places reserved for the audience of actors.

The prologue and epilogue in the Central Church were easily staged. If they can be well put on, they make vivid pictures and should be retained. If the setting seems too difficult for the ordinary stage or platform, these scenes may be omitted since the drama is complete without them.

SUGGESTION ON THE CHARACTERS.

Maxwell.—Tall, slight, distinguished; nervous but decided manner, 38.

Norman.—Large with an air of conscious power, determined face, 50.

Powers.—Medium size, alert, happy face, clouded by trouble, 40.

Clark.—Short, thick set, positive, quick speech, 55.

West.—Short, baldheaded, jolly face, blunt manner, 48.

Rollin.—A typical club and society man, 23.

Manning.—Tall, haggard, angular, quiet manner and voice, 25.

George.—Clerk in News Office. Newsboys.

Mrs. Winslow.—Small, pretty, soft-spoken, weak woman, 40.

Madam Page.—Large, majestic, positive, 65.

Virginia Page.—Slight, dark, decided, vivacious, 26.

Rachel Winslow.—Tall, fair, graceful, deliberate, 20.

Loreen.—Delicate, pretty girl, 18.

Alice, Maud, Dorothy.—Fashionable young ladies.

James, Mary, Jenny.—Servants to Virginia.

PROLOGUE.—Church Scene.

ACT I.—Editor's Office.

Six months elapse.

ACT II.—Room in Virginia's Home.

Six months elapse.

ACT III.—The Same.

EPILOGUE.—The Funeral of Loreen.

TIME AND PLACE.

Raymond.—A Manufacturing Town in the United States.

1896—1897.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

As presented by the young people of Central Congregational Church of Topeka, Kansas, under the direction of Professor F. H. Lane of Washburn College, December 19 and 20, 1910, at the church building.

Henry Maxwell.—Pastor of First Church Raymond
 Mr. Anthony Karnes
 Edward Norman.—Editor of The News.....Mr. Lester Filson
 Alexander Powers.—Railroad Superintendent.....Mr. Ralph Lemon
 Dr. Reginald West.....Mr. Chester Davison
 Rollin Page.—Brother of Virginia.....Mr. Morris Sanders
 Clark.—Managing Editor of News.....Mr. John Harrington
 John Manning.—Printer tramp.....Mr. Samuel Leger
 George.—Clerk in News office.....Mr. Fred Chamberlain
 News Boys.....
 Virginia Page.—A Millionaire.....Miss Ina Kendall
 Madam Page.—Virginia's grandmother.....Miss Hattie Halbert
 Rachel Winslow.—A singer of promise.....Miss Allison Shaver
 Mrs. Winslow.—Rachel's mother.....Miss Margaret Taylor
 Loreen.—Child of the slums.....Miss Maureen McKernan
 Society friends of Virginia.—Miss Florence White, Miss Jean Watts,
 Miss Carolyn Lovewell.
 Servants of Virginia.—Miss Vina Sherman, Miss Stella Ferrin, Mr.
 Lucius Marham.

PROLOGUE.

Curtain rises as church services are concluding. Maxwell standing; choir seated. Maxwell sits down, organist starts for his seat, slight stir of preparation for singing last hymn. Manning, a dusty, worn, shabby-looking young man, rises from one of the rear seats, holds faded hat in both hands and speaks, "I have been wondering since I came in here." He walks down the aisle to communion table and turns facing audience. Maxwell rises and stands looking down at him intently as he speaks. He repeats his first words.

MANNING.—(*Very quiet, simple manner.*) I have been wondering since I came in here if it would be just the thing to say a word at the close of this service. I am not drunk and I am not crazy and I am perfectly harmless, but if I die as there is every likelihood I shall in a few days, I want the satisfaction of thinking that I said my say in a place like this, before this sort of a crowd. I'm not an ordinary tramp, though I don't know any teaching of Christ that makes one kind of a tramp less worth saving than another. Do you? I lost my job ten months ago. I am a printer by trade. The new linotype machines are a beautiful specimen of invention but I know six men who have killed themselves inside of a year just on account of those machines. Of course I don't blame the newspapers for getting the machines. Meantime, what can a man do? I've tramped all over the country trying to find something. I'm not complaining, am I? Just stating facts. But I was wondering as I sat there under the gallery, if what you call following Jesus is the same thing as what He taught.

The minister said, (*here the man turns about and looks up at the pulpit*) that it was necessary for the disciple of Jesus to follow His steps, and he said the steps were obedience, faith, love, and imitation. But I did not hear him tell just what he meant that to mean, especially the last step. What do Christians mean by following the steps of Jesus? I've tramped through this city for three days trying to find a job and in all that time I've not had a word of sympathy or comfort except from your minister here, who said he was sorry for me and hoped I would find a job somewhere. Of course I understand you can't all go out of your way to hunt up jobs for people like me. I'm not asking you to, but what I feel puzzled about is, what is meant by following Jesus? Do you mean that you are suffering and denying yourselves and trying to save lost humanity just as I understand Jesus did? I see the ragged edge of things a good deal. I understand there are more than five hundred men in this city in my case. Most of them have families. My wife died four months ago. I'm glad she is out of trouble. My little girl is staying with a printer's family until I find a job. Somehow I get puzzled when I see so many Christians living in luxury and singing "Jesus, I my cross have taken, all to leave

and follow Thee," and remember how my wife died in a tenement in New York City, gasping for air and asking God to take the little girl too. It seems to me there's an awful lot of trouble in the world that somehow wouldn't exist if all the people who sing such songs went and lived them out. I suppose I don't understand. But what would Jesus do? Is that what you mean by following in His steps? It seems to me sometimes as if the people in the city churches had good clothes and nice houses to live in, and money to spend for luxuries, and could go away on summer vacations and all that, while the people outside of the churches, thousands of them, I mean, die in tenements and walk the streets for jobs, and never have a piano or a picture in the house, and grow up in misery and drunkenness and sin—

(He gives a queer lurch over in the direction of the communion table and lays one grimy hand on it. His hat falls upon the carpet at his feet. A stir goes through the congregation. Dr. West half rises, but as yet the silence is unbroken by any voice or movement worth mentioning in the audience. The man passes his other hand across his eyes and then without any warning, falls heavily forward on his face, full length, up the aisle.)

Curtain.

ACT I.

Interior of the private office of Edward Norman. Door at right opening on street; door at left opening into assistant's office. Desk at R. C. Table at L. C. covered with papers, correspondence, etc. Chairs at desk and table. Any available appointments suitable for an editor's office. Discovered at rise Norman writing at his desk. Enter Clark.

CLARK.—Here's this press report of yesterday's prize fight at the Resort,—three columns and a half! It all goes in?

NORMAN.—(*Absent-mindedly.*) Yes—No. Let me see it. (*Takes typewritten matter, runs over it carefully, then lays it on desk, and does some hard thinking.*) We won't run this to-day. (*continues writing.*)

CLARK.—(*Astonished.*) What did you say?

NORMAN.—Leave it out. We won't use it.

CLARK.—(*Unable to understand.*) But!

NORMAN.—(*Looks up.*) I think, Clark, it ought not to be printed.

CLARK.—Do you mean the paper goes to press without a word of the prize fight?

NORMAN.—(*Goes on writing.*) Yes, that's just what I mean.

CLARK.—But it's unheard of. All the other papers will print it. What will our subscribers say? Why, it's simply—(*pauses, unable to find words.*)

NORMAN.—(*Turns squarely around and faces him.*) Shut the door. Sit down. (*slight pause.*) Clark, were you in church three weeks ago, when that poor printer tramp addressed us?

CLARK.—Why, yes—I was—But—But what has that got to do with the prize fight?

NORMAN.—A good deal. That poor fellow's words made several of us see some things in a different light.

CLARK.—Yes?

NORMAN.—A little band joined Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell in a pledge not to do anything for one year without first asking the question: "What would Jesus do?" I was one of them.

CLARK.—(*Looks serious and speaks more slowly than usual.*) Yes—I know. I heard about it. How many took the pledge?

NORMAN.—Five, besides Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell. (*turns slightly away.*)

CLARK.—Five out of six hundred? You're certainly not in the majority.

NORMAN.—One man on the right side is a majority.

CLARK.—Well, I wish you success in whatever you are trying to do. But let's return to business. The printers are waiting for the copy. I don't see how we can keep out this report. The church members are just as keen about it as anybody else.

NORMAN.—(*Turns again and faces Clark squarely.*) Clark, if Christ were editing a daily paper do you honestly think he would print three columns and a half of prize fight?

CLARK.—(*Slowly.*) Well I—No, I don't suppose he would.

NORMAN.—Well, that is my reason for shutting this account out of the News.

CLARK.—(*Turns slightly away, gazes into space.*) What effect will that have on the paper?

NORMAN.—What do you think? (*with a keen glance at Clark.*)

CLARK.—I think it will simply ruin the paper. Why, it isn't feasible to run a paper now-a-days on any such basis. The world isn't ready for it. You can't make it pay. Just as sure as you live, if you shut out this prize fight report you will lose hundreds of subscribers. The very best people in town are eager to read it. Surely you can't afford to disregard the wishes of the public to such an extent.

NORMAN.—(*After a pause.*) See here, Clark, you are a member of a Christian church. (*slowly and impressively.*) What in your honest opinion is the right standard for determining conduct? Do you think men everywhere ought to follow Jesus as close as they can in their daily lives?

CLARK.—(*Gets up and walks uneasily toward L. E.*) Why,—yes,—I suppose if you put it on the ground of what they ought to do there is no other standard of conduct. (*faces Norman.*) But the question is, what is feasible? We can't do as we would do in an ideal world.

NORMAN.—Do you mean we can't run the paper strictly on Christian principles?

CLARK.—(*Bringing fist down on desk.*) Yes, that's just what I mean. It can't be done. We'll go bankrupt in thirty days.

NORMAN.—My pledge does not allow me to take account of that.

CLARK.—(*Barely escapes a contemptuous note.*) Take no account of the future of your business?

NORMAN.—Not so far as answering that question is concerned.

CLARK.—What do you think will be the outcome?

NORMAN.—I believe we can succeed and succeed better than ever. (*turns to desk as though terminating interview.*)

CLARK.—(*Starts to go, turns back L. C.*) Then the report does not go in?

NORMAN.—It does not. I am expecting good material to take its place. It ought to be here now, so be prepared to hurry it up when it comes.

CLARK.—(*Stopping at door*) Are you going to say anything about the absence of the report?

NORMAN.—No. Let the paper go to press as though there had been no such thing as a prize fight yesterday. (*Norman turns to writing, Maxwell enters. Shaking hands.*) Just thinking of you. Brought your last sermon? I have just the right space,—left vacant by omission of the prize fight. (*laughs.*)

MAXWELL.—(*Smiles, takes manuscript from pocket.*) I fear it will hardly fill that space to the satisfaction of the public. You insisted on having it, so don't blame me if your circulation decreases.

NORMAN.—I won't. Have a chair. (*rings bell on desk.*) It was a good sermon,—one greatly needed. Most of us are political cowards.

MAXWELL.—I have been. I really would find it easier to live in the Rectangle and work in the slums for the rest of my life for a bare living than to plunge into a political fight. (*Enter Clark.*)

NORMAN.—(*Hands sermon to Clark.*) Here's your prize fight report. Thought we'd run it after all.

CLARK.—(*Takes paper and goes to L. E.*) I thought you'd repent. I'll hurry it up.

NORMAN.—Good!

CLARK.—(*Discovers mistake.*) Why, this is—

NORMAN.—(*Laughs.*) It's a prize fight all right and the minister's in it. (*Exit Clark.*) Clark can't understand my shutting out the prize fight. It's not to be wondered at. I've given the people prize fights and scandals for a good many years.

MAXWELL.—And I have been in this whiskey-ridden city for ten years and never raised a protest against our corrupt city government before. Now, how shall we go to work to oust our unprincipled officials?

NORMAN.—We must make large plans and profit by the politician method of organized, united effort.

MAXWELL.—Yes, we must unite. I have spoken to several ministers since Sunday. They will all help. Father McGann is enthusiastic.

NORMAN.—He is a good man and will be of great service, but this fight will be no child's play, Maxwell.

MAXWELL.—No. I have hard work to get my own consent to go into it.

NORMAN.—It will take physical as well as moral courage. The whiskey element in *this* town stop at nothing to gain their ends.

MAXWELL.—(*Laughs a little.*) Well, that simply stirs my savage blood a little. I might stay out of a fight voluntarily, but I don't propose to be kept out by intimidation.

NORMAN.—A fight on local option some years ago resulted in a riot. One man was killed and several injured.

MAXWELL.—That was before my time.

NORMAN.—Yes, we have made no effort since. But we have a year before the next election. We will see what can be done. If the last words of that poor fellow *should* lead us to revolutionize this corrupt city, he will not have died in vain.

MAXWELL.—(*Remorsefully.*) If I had performed a Christian's plain duty toward him, he might not have died.

NORMAN.—Don't reproach yourself so severely, Maxwell. It would have made no difference in his death. Dr. West said it was his heart. He had tramped the country for ten months and was not strong enough to stand it.

MAXWELL.—But you know he called on me Saturday and asked me to help him find work.

NORMAN.—He called here, too.

MAXWELL.—But a Christian Minister! To let a man go from his door in that condition! At that moment I was writing a sermon on following Christ! Norman, you don't know how I hate my-

self when I think of it. When he came up the aisle that Sunday and began to talk, I felt brought to a bar of justice, and when he fell dead, I felt like a murderer. (*A short pause.*)

NORMAN.—We are all under the same condemnation. He had tramped the town for three days, and you were the only one who gave him even a word of encouragement.

MAXWELL.—It seems incredible, and Christianity nineteen centuries old! In spite of the effect he produced,—people talked of little else for a week,—they are already forgetting it.

NORMAN.—For myself the impression deepens.

MAXWELL.—That is true for me and, I think, for all our pledge takers. The man's perfectly quiet manner, which yet covered most passionate feeling gave intense effect to his words. I confess I was surprised when Dr. West joined us in the pledge. He calls himself an agnostic.

NORMAN.—No one will more conscientiously carry it out. Awfully good fellow! Rough and blunt in his ways, but a heart of pure gold.

MAXWELL.—I am glad Virginia has him to help her along in her new life. She will not receive much sympathy from the rest of her family. Madam Page is a typical society woman and Rollin is devoted to his club. Good fellow, though.

NORMAN.—Miss Winslow will receive some opposition in carrying out her pledge, I fancy.

MAXWELL.—I am afraid so. Mrs. Winslow is very ambitious for Rachel, and has spent a good deal of money on her musical education. Their ideas of Rachel's future are likely to clash.

NORMAN.—She and Virginia are great friends. I am expecting Virginia here this morning. I have some papers for her to sign. I advise her somewhat about her business.

MAXWELL.—She attends to it herself?

NORMAN.—Yes, Virginia has a good business head and has complete control of her property. She looks personally after all her investments. (*Enter Virginia and Rachel R. E. Shaking hands with Rachel.*) Good morning, Miss Winslow. (*Maxwell shakes hands with Rachel. Shaking hands with Virginia.*) I hoped you would be in this morning. Well, what did you think about that proposition?

VIRGINIA.—The land is certainly very cheap. It cannot fail to be a good investment. I have the money lying idle, so I think I will take it.

NORMAN.—You will never regret it. It's worth more than double the price asked, but the land has been in litigation for years, and they want to settle up the estate now.

VIRGINIA.—All right. I will take it.

NORMAN.—If you will sign a couple of papers here, I can attend to the whole thing for you.

VIRGINIA.—Thank you, Mr. Norman, you are very kind. (*Norman goes to desk and begins to arrange papers.*)

MAXWELL.—(*Turning to Virginia.*) I was just about to tell Mr. Norman of a proposition your uncle, Dr. West, made.

VIRGINIA.—What was it, Mr. Maxwell?

MAXWELL.—He wants to put up a tent in the Rectangle and hold religious services.

VIRGINIA.—(*Smiles.*) Uncle is a dear, but who would have thought of his proposing that.

MAXWELL.—I thought it somewhat surprising for an agnostic.

RACHEL.—Dr. West is no agnostic when it comes to anything worth while. He is positive enough then.

VIRGINIA.—Rachel and uncle are great chums. He has called her his little sweetheart ever since he took her on expeditions to Banbury Cross. I wouldn't wonder if she knew all about the Rectangle scheme.

MAXWELL.—(*Turns to Rachel.*) Is that so? I saw him only a moment. He simply mentioned it and was gone in a flash. Tell us about it.

RACHEL.—He only said he thought it would be a good thing, and asked me if I would sing.

NORMAN.—(*Turning from desk.*) What did you say?

RACHEL.—Of course I said yes. I thought just as he did about it.

VIRGINIA.—(*Laughing.*) Of course she did. Rollin often says if she would listen to him as she does to uncle, there would be some hope for him. (*All smile but Rachel.*)

RACHEL.—(*A little stiffly.*) If he was always right, as Dr. West is, I probably should.

VIRGINIA.—(*Puts arm around her.*) Of course, dear, Rollin is not very sage, but he is a dear boy and will improve with age. (*Enter West R.*) Why, there is uncle now. (*West goes to C. Virginia to R. C. Rachel to L. C. near Maxwell.*)

WEST.—I saw you girls coming in here and thought it a good chance to spring my scheme on you.

NORMAN.—Go on, let's have it.

WEST.—There's a vacant lot near that worst saloon in the Rectangle. I can get the use of it. Let's put up a tent and give those people something to hear except obscenity and profanity.

MAXWELL.—We were just talking about it.

WEST.—Well, what do you think about it? Go in for it?

MAXWELL.—Do you think we could get hold of them? Be possible to interest them?

WEST.—If Rachel will sing they will be interested quick enough.

NORMAN.—(*Laughs.*) And Mr. Maxwell will get in a little on the side?

WEST.—May be. But it's awful,—the life those young girls are exposed to. I've known some of them since they were babies, as I have these two. (*Puts a hand on each.*) I wish you girls could do something for one of them that I have in mind.

VIRGINIA.—Tell us about her, uncle.

WEST.—Father and mother both dead. Both killed by the drink devil. I was in hopes to save her, but accounts have not been satisfactory of late. I am afraid she is getting in bad ways.

VIRGINIA.—What is her name?

WEST.—Loreen. Pretty—too pretty for that place. An old fellow like me can't do much. It needs a woman.

VIRGINIA.—Where does she live, uncle?

WEST.—That's the worst of it. I've lost track of her, but if we have services there and Rachel sings, she'll come. She is pas-

sionately fond of music. Fear it has lured her into the saloons. Well, Mr. Maxwell, what do you say?

MAXWELL.—You're right as usual, West. We'll all do our part. (*Looks at others, who assent.*)

WEST.—That's right. I knew you'd see it. Those people are not so hardened a crowd as the First Church. Give them the same chance and see what happens.

NORMAN.—What will we do about a tent?

WEST.—I'll see to that. I think that big firm will give us one. Virginia, are you going home? I will go with you for lunch.

VIRGINIA.—Delighted to have you. Just as soon as I sign these papers. (*Goes to desk and signs papers.*)

MAXWELL.—Can we do anything to better conditions in the Rectangle, until we get rid of the saloons?

WEST.—(*Sighs.*) Not much, I suppose. But we may keep them from becoming worse and in time you may grow enough Christians to stop licensing them.

MAXWELL.—The Christian element must triumph in time.

NORMAN.—We will keep up the fight till it does, and fight in that hope.

WEST.—Well, girls, are you ready?

VIRGINIA.—Yes. Rachel, come home with us. You don't often have a chance to lunch with uncle.

WEST.—Of course she's coming. (*Takes both girls by the arm and gently pushes them toward the door R.*) Have you folks learned to get along without eating?

NORMAN.—I cut out lunch and make it up at dinner.

WEST.—I make it up both times. Good bye! (*All good bye. Exeunt.*)

MAXWELL.—Fine girls. They will be invaluable to our work in the Rectangle. But I presume the idea will be distasteful to Madam Page and Mrs. Winslow.

NORMAN.—Yes, I suppose so. But Virginia is entirely independent, and Rachel is much stronger than her mother.

MAXWELL.—All our pledge takers here this morning except Powers. He is very enthusiastic over some plans he is making for his workmen. He is in a position to do a good deal for them. Very popular, I think.

NORMAN.—Yes. He's a great worker and a good man.

MAXWELL.—(*Looks at watch.*) It is later than I thought. Good bye. See you at our meeting tonight?

NORMAN.—Yes. Good bye! (*Exit Maxwell R. Turns to desk and looks over papers. Enter Clark.*)

CLARK.—Here is the program for the Sunday morning edition. Any changes to make?

NORMAN.—(*Turns around, leans back with his hands at the back of his head and speaks somewhat whimsically.*) What would you say, if I should discontinue the Sunday paper? (*Smiles.*)

CLARK.—(*Seats himself very deliberately and looks grave.*) Mr. Norman, I have been connected with the News for a long time. May I be absolutely frank?

NORMAN.—Yes, Clark, I think we should thoroughly understand each other. You are a good friend, one I would not willingly lose. Say what is in your mind.

CLARK.—If you discontinue this paper, I shall consider you insane. It would mean a direct loss of thousands.

NORMAN.—From my point of view, that is not the principal thing, you know.

CLARK.—But why do you object to the Sunday Edition? Most of the work is done through the week, and there is much instruction, literary, religious, and general, that many of the readers would not otherwise obtain.

NORMAN.—Yes, a page or two, to forty of sport, theaters, and scandal.

CLARK.—It would not be fair to the subscribers; at least not until their subscriptions expire. They have paid for it.

NORMAN.—That is true. I must take time to consider. Leave the programme, I will look it over.

CLARK.—This reform business in journalism is a dangerous experiment, Mr. Norman. If we don't give the people what they want, we don't give them anything very long.

NORMAN.—Better nothing than the wrong thing. And see here, I have been looking at our advertising columns. As the contracts run out, notify the advertising agent not to solicit or renew the "ads" I have marked here.

CLARK.—(*Looks over the columns with a very serious air.*) This will mean a great loss to the "News." How long do you think you can keep it up?

NORMAN.—Clark, if Jesus were editor and proprietor of a daily paper in Raymond, would he print advertisements of whiskey in it?

CLARK.—Well—no—I don't suppose He would. But we can't do as He would. Newspapers can't be run on any such basis.

NORMAN.—Why not?

CLARK.—(*Irritated.*) Why not! Because they will lose more money than they make, that's all.

NORMAN.—(*As if to himself.*) Do you think so? (*after a pause.*) You may do as I said. I shall look into other advertisements of a doubtful character. But I feel a conviction in regard to these that cannot be silenced.

CLARK.—It comes to this, then: you will bankrupt the paper in thirty days. We might as well face that future fact.

NORMAN.—I don't think we shall. Will you stay by the News, till it is bankrupt?

CLARK.—I cannot bear to leave, but Mr. Norman, I don't understand you. You are not the same man this week that I have always known.

NORMAN.—I don't know myself, either, Clark. Something remarkable has caught me up and borne me on. But I was never more convinced of final success. But you have not answered my question. Will you stay with me?

CLARK.—(*Hesitates.*) I can't leave you as long as you need me, Mr. Norman. I will stay (*Holds out his hand.*)

NORMAN.—(*Taking it.*) Thank you, Clark. I would be sorry to lose you. It would be difficult to fill your place.

CLARK.—I will stick by you, but I feel that the business under your new policy may collapse and ruin us at any moment.

NORMAN.—(*Smiling.*) I'll give you time to get out from the ruins. (*Clark shakes his head doubtfully. Exit L. E. Norman turns to desk and looks over papers. Enter Powers R. E.*)

POWERS.—Norman, can you spare me a half hour? It is a good deal to ask, but— (*He looks distressed and uncertain.*)

NORMAN.—(*Rises and takes him cordially by the hand.*) Certainly, certainly, come in. Sit down. (*Looks at him earnestly.*) You look worried, Powers. I am not used to seeing that look on your face. What is it? You know we are pledged to help and stand by each other.

POWERS.—Thank you. I felt I needed your advice. (*Takes paper from pocket.*) Look at that, Norman. (*Norman takes it, looks it over, starts, reads carefully, then drops it, and the two men look at each other.*)

POWERS.—Well!

NORMAN.—It is as distinct a breaking of the law, as if a person should enter a house and rob it. This discrimination in rebates is in total contempt of the statutes.

POWERS.—I know it. And this is positive evidence to convict the company of willful, intelligent violation of the laws.

NORMAN.—But this is not connected with your department!

POWERS.—(*Eagerly.*) No. It is none of my business. I should be meddling with something that does not concern me. Surely it is none of my business. Don't you think so, Norman?

NORMAN.—(*Hesitates.*) I don't understand. How did this paper come into your possession?

POWERS.—This paper was not meant for me, but by some error was addressed to me. Of course I would be expected to return it to the freight office, and know nothing about it.

NORMAN.—I see. Your duties to your employers and state clash.

POWERS.—(*Rises and walks excitedly.*) Norman, what can I do in this railroad business where there is so much going on that makes it impossible to live by the Christian standard? If I see that everything is straight in my own department, isn't that all that can be reasonably expected?

NORMAN.—I suppose such discrimination in rates is no particular news.

POWERS.—No. Of course I always knew there was something of the sort going on, but I had no proof. Now I have it, what ought I to do? I would have to resign my position. There is my family. (*drops in a chair.*) They have always been used to luxury.

NORMAN.—(*Rises and puts his hand sympathetically on his shoulder.*) Don't do anything in haste. Think it over.

POWERS.—I had made so many plans for bettering the condition of my men. The company were going to help me. (*rises.*) Must I give it all up?

NORMAN.—There are many sides to a question like that. I wish I were wise enough to advise you.

POWERS.—(*Puts his hands on Norman's shoulders, speaks in low passionate tone.*) Norman, what would Jesus do? (*A slight pause.*)

NORMAN.—My friend, that is a question no man can answer for another. I am powerless to help you there. (*Powers drops his hands and sinks into a chair.*) Believe me, there is nothing possible I would refuse. My sympathy is yours. It is a hard thing—but I know you will do right as you see it.

(*They are silent. Voices are heard R. E. Norman throws open door, revealing George and newsboys with papers.*)

1ST BOY.—What ye giving us?

2ND BOY.—Think we can sell these things?

3RD BOY.—What's de matter with ye?

4TH BOY.—Don't ye know nuffin here?

5TH BOY.—Sumpin slipped a cog in the Newsy sure.

NORMAN.—What's the matter, George?

GEORGE.—The boys can't sell the News because the prize fight isn't in it. (*Looks at Norman curiously.*)

NORMAN.—(*Hesitates a moment.*) How many papers are there here? Boys, count them out, and I'll buy them tonight. (*Combined stare and wild counting.*)

1ST BOY.—Seven!

2ND BOY.—Ten!

3RD BOY.—Fifteen!

4TH BOY.—Nine!

5TH BOY.—Five!

NORMAN.—Give them their money, George, and if other boys come with the same complaint, buy their unsold copies. Is that fair, boys?

1ST BOY.—Well I should say.

2ND BOY.—Will ye keep this up?

3RD BOY.—Will dis be a continual performance for de benefit of de fraternity? (*Exeunt boys and George, R. E. Norman smiles and returns to desk. Powers has been listening intently and a look of decision has taken the place of irresolution on his face.*)

POWERS.—Thank you, Norman. You have answered me. (*With a look of understanding, and long hand clasp they separate. Exits Powers, R. E. Norman stands at desk in thought.*)

Curtain.

ACT II.

Living-room Virginia's home. At back arch into hall; book case, right and left of arch—rocker near; opening R. into library; door at left; window L; couch near window; library-table R. C; arm chair L. of table; stool behind table; books and magazines on table; sewing-table L. C; rocker near; push-bell in wall L; a fittingly furnished room. Virginia and Mrs. Page sewing. Virginia near work-table in arm chair. Virginia and Mrs. Page in arm chair, discovered at rise.

MRS. PAGE.—If we are going abroad this summer, Virginia, we ought to be making our arrangements. We have barely time now.

VIRGINIA.—Would you be very much disappointed, grandmother, if I did not go?

MRS. PAGE.—(*Astonished.*) Why, Virginia, what do you mean? Of course, Mr. Powers' fanatical action makes it impossible for Mrs. Powers and Celia to go, but Mrs. Wright and Maud are anxious to go and we would have a delightful time.

VIRGINIA.—I am sorry to disappoint you, but I do not feel as though I ought to spend the time or money.

MRS. PAGE.—(*Drops her work and gazes at Virginia with patient exasperation. As Virginia does not raise her eyes, Mrs. Page picks it up again and speaks in a slightly ironical tone.*) I fear Mr. Norman is no longer a very safe adviser. Did that last investment he proposed turn out badly? I supposed our affairs were in prosperous condition.

VIRGINIA.—So they are, grandmother. It makes me the more responsible for a right use of my wealth. You know the pledge I took with the others.

MRS. PAGE.—Yes, I know. It was certainly the most spectacular, sentimental thing I ever knew Mr. Maxwell to do—making such a proposition as that pledge.

VIRGINIA.—You would not have said so, grandmother, if you had been at the meeting. (*Stops work and looks straight at Mrs. Page.*) If an audible voice from Heaven had sanctioned our pledge to follow in the steps of Jesus, we could not have felt more certain of God's blessing.

MRS. PAGE.—(*Quietly at first but increasing in warmth.*) All fanatics use that line of reasoning. Of course any highly wrought emotion is likely to give rise to illusions. But look at what started this frenzy, for I certainly think it is that. A poor tramp just coming down with a fever, wandered into our church, disturbed the services, and talked to an amazed congregation for five minutes on socialism. Of course it was shocking for him to fall down in a dying condition, but what was there in it to make us change all our future plans? Everything possible was done for him. Mr. Maxwell even sent for his little girl and adopted her. What more could be done? (*This last in a distinctly irritable, cross tone.*)

VIRGINIA.—(*Reproachfully.*) Grandmother! Of course, nothing more can be done for *him*, but there are thousands who need help. As he said, why should the people in the churches have good clothes, nice houses and all the luxuries, and people outside die in tenement houses, or walk the street for jobs, and grow up in drunkenness, misery and sin?

MRS. PAGE.—Of course, there are always shiftless people out of money and work. If we should divide all we have with them, they would soon be as badly off as ever.

VIRGINIA.—Mr. Manning was not shiftless,—only terribly unfortunate. The new machines had turned him out of his job as printer and he knew no other trade. He had tramped the country for ten months looking for work, but he was not an ordinary tramp.

MRS. PAGE.—(*More gently.*) No, I suppose not. Of course he was unbalanced or he would never have thought of disturbing the church service.

VIRGINIA.—His mind seemed to me remarkably clear and logical. He simply asked in the quietest, most natural manner what Christians mean by following in the footsteps of Christ. You know that was the subject of Mr. Maxwell's sermon that morning. He seemed perplexed, as I have been ever since. Grandmother, what do we mean by following Christ?

MRS. PAGE.—Why, Virginia! Of course you know. It was very sad,—his falling down and dying that way, but I do hope it won't make you fanatical.

VIRGINIA.—Is it fanatical for a Christian to ask what following Christ really means?

MRS. PAGE.—No, but this is the point: you have promised to do nothing without first asking, "What would Jesus Do?" Now how can you possibly tell? Can Mr. Norman tell how Christ would run a newspaper? Or Mr. Powers what he would do as head of a railroad shop? There were no such things in Christ's time. (*Rises and puts down work. Bell rings.*) You will see, Virginia, this pledge will prove absolutely futile. (*Turns to go out R. Sees Rachel in hall.*) Oh, how do you do, dear. So glad to see you. Come right in. Virginia is here. I will be back in a few minutes. (*Exit R.*)

VIRGINIA.—(*Rises, embraces Rachel C.*) O Rachel! How glad I am to see you! I was just thinking about you.

RACHEL.—I just had to see you today, Virginia.

VIRGINIA.—And I was longing for a talk with you. What a pretty new hat. (*Taking off Rachel's hat and looking at it critically.*)

RACHEL.—(*Pleased.*) Do you think so? I did not pay as much for it as I usually do. Do you think it is becoming?

VIRGINIA.—(*Sets it on her head again.*) Yes, very, but you look well in anything, Rachel.

RACHEL.—(*Puts her arms about Virginia.*) I'm glad you think so, dear, but I did not come to be complimented. I want to talk to you on a very important subject.

VIRGINIA.—(*Lays hat on table.*) What is it, Rachel? (*Seats Rachel in arm chair and draws up stool.*)

RACHEL.—Mr. Crandall has made me a flattering offer to travel with his comic opera troupe.

VIRGINIA.—He was at church two weeks ago.

RACHEL.—Yes. He seemed much pleased with my voice. He said there was money in it, and wanted an answer as soon as possible.

VIRGINIA.—You have often talked of doing something like that, haven't you, Rachel?

RACHEL.—Yes, I know. But now I cannot reconcile it with my judgment of what Jesus would do. I have a feeling that I ought not to accept.

VIRGINIA.—Well, that concert offer is still open, is it not? That seems really more desirable to me.

RACHEL.—Yes, there is no virtue in saying no to Mr. Crandall when I have that.

VIRGINIA.—It certainly seems all that you could ask,—a perfectly reputable company to travel with,—an impersonator, a violinist, and a male quartette. You are asked to go as vocalist.

RACHEL.—And a salary of \$200 a month. It does tempt me a little.

VIRGINIA.—Why do you say tempt, Rachel? Do you think such a career wrong?

RACHEL.—No, I don't know that I can say that, but I do not feel satisfied that Jesus would go. What do you think?

VIRGINIA.—You mustn't ask me. (*With a sad smile.*) I believe Mr. Maxwell was right when he said each one must decide for himself what is Christ-like. (*Rises, goes to window L. and looks out.*) I am having a hard time, too, dear, to decide what Jesus would do.

RACHEL.—(*Following and putting arm around her.*) Are you Virginia? Tell me about your difficulties.

VIRGINIA.—Rachel, what does all this contrast in the conditions of the rich and the poor mean as you ask the question "What would Jesus do?" (*Puts both arms about Rachel and looks at her earnestly. Talks rapidly.*) Think of that poor fellow, tramping the city for three days and then dropping dead of starvation and fatigue in a church like ours! No place in Raymond where a man like that could find help. And we call ourselves Christians!

RACHEL.—I have thought about it so much lately. What do we mean by singing "All for Jesus,—All my thoughts and all my doings, All my days and all my hours?" I wonder the poor unfortunates do not swarm our churches and demand what we mean.

VIRGINIA.—What a mockery it is! When I honestly try to imagine Jesus living the life I live, I am under condemnation for being one of the most wicked, selfish creatures in the world. I have not looked out of this window for weeks without a feeling of horror towards myself as I see the humanity that pours by this house.

RACHEL.—I feel it all, Virginia, and that is the reason I hesitate to accept the concert offer. Of what use is my talent of song, if I do no more than sell it for so much a month, go on a concert tour, dress beautifully, and gain reputation as a singer? Is that what Jesus would do (*Enter Rollin, from hall.*)

ROLLIN.—Good morning, Miss Winslow. (*They start. He comes down L. O. and shakes hands.*) This is an unexpected pleasure. I am delighted to have this opportunity to congratulate you.

RACHEL.—To what do you refer?

ROLLIN.—I understand you are going on the stage. We shall all be delighted, I am sure.

RACHEL.—(*Annoyed, crosses to library table, and opens book.*) Who told you?

ROLLIN.—(*Bringing rocking chair to C.*) Oh, we hear a thing or two on the street. Besides, every one saw Crandall, the manager, at church two weeks ago. He doesn't go to hear the preaching. In fact I know other people who don't, either,—not when there's something better to hear.

RACHEL.—(*Quietly, sitting in arm chair.*) You're mistaken; I'm not going on the stage.

ROLLIN.—It's a great pity. You'd make a hit. Everybody is talking about your singing. (*Rachel turns away and does not reply.*)

VIRGINIA.—(*At sewing table, picking up her work, after moment of silence.*) Whom do you mean by "everybody"?

ROLLIN.—Whom? I mean all the people who hear Miss Winslow on Sunday. What other time do they hear her? It's a great pity, I say, that the general public outside of Raymond cannot hear her voice.

(*Mrs. Page re-enters as Rollin is speaking; he offers chair and stands back of library table, playing with book.*)

RACHEL.—(*A little sharply.*) Let us talk of something else.

MRS. PAGE.—(*Picks up work and sits in rocker.*) My dear, Rollin never could pay an indirect compliment. He is like his father in that. But we are all curious to know something of your plans. We claim the right from old acquaintance, you know.

RACHEL.—(*Apologetically.*) Yes, yes, Mrs. Page, I understand that.

MRS. PAGE.—And Virginia has already told us of your concert company offer.

VIRGINIA.—(*Smiling.*) I supposed of course that was public property. It was in the "News" yesterday.

RACHEL.—Oh, certainly. (*With a little hesitation.*) Well—Virginia and I have been talking about it. I have decided not to accept—that is as far as I have gone yet.

MRS. PAGE.—Would you mind telling us, Rachel, your reasons for refusing? It looks like a good opportunity. Don't you think the general public ought to hear you? I feel like Rollin about that. A voice like yours belongs to a larger audience than Raymond and the First Church.

RACHEL.—(*Looking earnestly at Mrs. Page.*) I have no other reason than a conviction that Jesus would do the same thing.

(*Mrs. Page makes an impatient gesture. Rollin stares.*)

MRS. PAGE.—Girls! You are becoming actually insane. This affair has turned your heads. Listen to reason.

VIRGINIA.—What is reason, grandmother?

MRS. PAGE.—Times have greatly changed. It is impossible to apply the teaching Christ gave His generation literally to ours. We must accept the spirit, not the words.

VIRGINIA.—What is the spirit, grandmother?

ROLLIN.—Excuse me, ladies. The conversation is getting beyond my depth. I shall retire for a cigar. (*Exit Rollin R.*)

MRS. PAGE.—(*Angry but controlled.*) I am older than you, young ladies. What you have promised in a spirit of false emotion, I presume, is impossible of performance.

VIRGINIA.—Do you mean, grandmother, that we cannot possibly act as Jesus would, or do you mean that if we try, we shall offend the customs and prejudices of society?

MRS. PAGE.—(*Losing control of herself.*) It is not required! It is not necessary! Besides how can you act with any—(*pauses, turns to Rachel, speaks quietly.*) What do you expect to do with your voice, anyway? My dear, is it not foolish? What will your mother say to your decision?

RACHEL.—I don't know what mother will say yet.

MRS. PAGE.—My dear, do not decide hastily. (*Rises.*) You will see it in a different light after wiser thought. Depend upon it, you will live to regret it, if you do not accept the concert company offer, or something like it. Excuse me, girls. I have some letters to write. (*Exit R.*)

VIRGINIA.—Poor grandmother! I fear it will be hard to reconcile her to what I feel is my duty. (*Jennie enters from hall with a card.*) It is Mr. Maxwell. Will you come, Rachel?

RACHEL.—No, dear. I will stay here. (*Virginia goes out, and Rachel falls into a deep study. Rollin comes to the door R. and stands looking at her.*)

ROLLIN.—Sorry to disturb your thoughts, Miss Winslow. Could you deign to bestow a glance in this direction?

RACHEL.—I did not see you.

ROLLIN.—I wouldn't mind that, if only you thought of me once in a while. (*Taking rocker, pause.*) Do you ever think of me, Miss Winslow?

RACHEL.—(*With a smile.*) Oh, yes, quite often.

ROLLIN.—Are you thinking of me now?

RACHEL.—Yes, that is—yes, I am.

ROLLIN.—What?

RACHEL.—Do you want me to be absolutely truthful?

ROLLIN.—Of course.

RACHEL.—(*Laughing.*) I would rather not say.

ROLLIN.—Now look here, Rachel. You know how I feel. Why do you treat me so hard? You used to like me a little.

RACHEL.—(*Lightly.*) Did I? Of course we got on very well as boy and girl, but we are older now.

ROLLIN.—You know well enough, Rachel, how I feel towards you. Isn't there any hope? I could make you happy. I've loved you a good many years—

RACHEL.—(*With nervous laugh.*) Why, how old do you think I am?

ROLLIN.—(*Doggedly.*) You know what I mean. And you have no right to laugh at me just because I want you to marry me.

RACHEL.—(*After a little hesitation.*) I'm not! But it is useless for you to speak, Rollin.

ROLLIN.—Would you—that is—do you think—if you gave me time, I would—

RACHEL.—(*Firmly.*) No.

ROLLIN.—(After a pause, with more manliness and dignity than he has shown before.) Miss Winslow, I ask you to be my wife. Is there any hope for me?

RACHEL.—(Decidedly.) None in the least.

ROLLIN.—(As if he had a right to a truthful answer.) Will you tell me why?

RACHEL.—I do not feel towards you as a woman ought to feel towards the man she is to marry.

ROLLIN.—In other words, you do not love me?

RACHEL.—I do not and cannot.

ROLLIN.—Why?

RACHEL.—Because—

ROLLIN.—Tell me just why. You cannot hurt me more than you have already.

RACHEL.—Well, I don't and can't love you because you have no purpose in life. What do you ever do to make the world better? You spend your time in club life, in amusements, in travel, in luxury. What is there in such a life to attract me?

ROLLIN.—(With a little laugh.) Not much, I guess. Still I don't know as I am any worse than the rest of the men around me. I'm not as bad as some.

RACHEL.—That is not enough for me. The man I marry must do something in the world worth while. (A slight pause.)

ROLLIN.—I am glad to know your reason. (Rising.) I think I will go to the club. (Bows gravely.) Good morning. (Exit.)

(Rachel rises and starts as though to call him back, but restrains herself, throws herself back into her chair and covers her face with her hands. She does not hear Virginia when she enters. Virginia puts her arms around her.)

VIRGINIA.—Well, got it thought out?

RACHEL.—Yes. But it is a little hard for me to tell mother. She will be so disappointed.

VIRGINIA.—Yes, dear, I know. (A slight pause.) Mr. Maxwell wants to hold an extra service this week. Saturday night. Can you go?

RACHEL.—Yes, certainly.

VIRGINIA.—Uncle and I will call for you as usual.

RACHEL.—Thank you, dear. Now I must go. I want to have a talk with mother as soon as possible. (The girls look earnestly at each other and go out rear with arms about each other.)

(Enter R Mrs. Page and Mrs. Winslow.)

MRS. PAGE.—I left the girls here. They must have gone up to Virginia's room. Sit down. (Offers rocker.) This is a comfortable chair. They will soon be back.

MRS. WINSLOW.—Oh, it doesn't matter. I just ran over. I thought I would walk back with Rachel if she was ready.

MRS. PAGE.—I suppose they have retired for private consultation. (With a little laugh. Sits in arm chair.)

MRS. WINSLOW.—(Gives an answering one.) They have always been great friends.

MRS. PAGE.—Yes, and to tell the truth, Mrs. Winslow, I have hoped for a closer relation.

MRS. WINSLOW.—(Laughs.) Indeed?

MRS. PAGE.—Rollin and Rachel were sweethearts as children. I have hoped they might always be, but there seems to be a cloud between them now.

MRS. WINSLOW.—I have noticed that they do not seem quite as easy in each other's society. (*Laughs.*) I heard him call her Miss Winslow the other day. They have been Rollin and Rachel since babyhood. But I didn't think much about it. Young folks will have their little tiffs.

MRS. PAGE.—I am afraid it is more than a little tiff, but whatever the trouble is, I am sure Rollin's feelings have not changed.

MRS. WINSLOW.—Oh, I am sure Rachel likes him. And I do, too,—always have, ever since he was a little shaver.

MRS. PAGE.—Virginia loves Rachel like a sister and there is no one I would as soon see Rollin's wife.

MRS. WINSLOW.—Our families have always been great friends. I hope there is nothing seriously amiss between them.

MRS. PAGE.—(*Confidentially.*) Do you know what I think?

MRS. WINSLOW.—(*Interested.*) No.

MRS. PAGE.—Well, I think it is on account of the new fad she and Virginia have taken up.

MRS. WINSLOW.—Oh, do you think so?

MRS. PAGE.—Yes. You see they take it so seriously, and Rollin has never shown any interest in religious things.

MRS. WINSLOW.—Well, I shouldn't be surprised. Rachel's conduct has been rather trying lately. Mr. Crandall and that Concert Company are both impatient for an answer, and she keeps putting them off. I half believe she is thinking of refusing them, although she has not said that to me. If she should, after all the money I have spent on her musical education and the plans I have made—(*Words fail her.*)

MRS. PAGE.—(*Looks sharply at Mrs. W.*) She—She certainly does not need the training she has had to sing gospel hymns in the Rectangle. It is simply absurd.

MRS. WINSLOW.—That's what I told her. Of course, all church members mean to follow Christ and imitate him, as far as is consistent with present day surroundings.

MRS. PAGE.—Certainly, we all understand that.

(*Virginia, wearing hat and long spring coat, is seen in arch.*)

VIRGINIA.—(*Speaks from arch.*) I am going out for a little while, grandmother. (*Sees Mrs. Winslow and comes down C.*) Oh, how do you do, Mrs. Winslow? Rachel has just gone.

MRS. WINSLOW.—And you are going. (*Smiling as they shake hands.*)

VIRGINIA.—Yes, I was going out but I am in no haste. So glad you came in. If I had known you were here, I would have kept Rachel.

MRS. WINSLOW.—Oh, I just came to walk home with her. I did not come for a call, but as long as I am here will visit with your grandmother a little while. Don't let me detain you.

(*Voices heard in hall.*)

ALICE.—Oh, never mind, Jennie.

MAUD.—We will go right in. (*Enter from hall Dorothy, Alice, Maud, Virginia steps forward to meet them.*)

VIRGINIA.—(*Puts her arm around Dorothy and shakes hands with others.*) Good morning, girls. So glad to see you. (*Maud and Alice bow to older ladies but Dorothy goes to them, shakes hands and sits on stool near Mrs. Page. Virginia starts to take off her hat.*) Sit down, girls.

MAUD.—(*Restraining her.*) No, no. Don't take it off. We came to get you to go driving with us.

ALICE.—It is too lovely to stay in the house. Just the morning for a drive.

VIRGINIA.—It would be very pleasant—but—

ALICE.—Where have you kept yourself all this time? We hardly catch a glimpse of you any more.

VIRGINIA.—I have been rather busy.

MAUD.—We hear you have gone into the show business, Virginia. Tell us about it.

VIRGINIA.—(*Leading them to the couch, sitting down between them.*) I have been helping a little at the Rectangle meetings.

ALICE.—You have a tent down there, don't you, and hold meetings?

MAUD.—And Rachel sings?

VIRGINIA.—Yes.

ALICE.—Just think of it! Our minister and soprano in the Rectangle!

VIRGINIA.—Why not?

ALICE.—O I don't know, but it seems funny. I've been crazy to go down but somehow I never could get any body to go with me.

MAUD.—I'd gone if you'd asked me.

DOROTHY.—(*Who has been talking to others.*) It's a horrid place there, isn't it?

VIRGINIA.—Yes, it is a disgrace to Raymond that such conditions are allowed.

MAUD.—Oh, well, it can't be helped in a manufacturing town.

VIRGINIA.—We think it can. We are going to try, anyway.

ALICE.—But aren't the people awfully dirty? I should think it would be horrid to be near them.

VIRGINIA.—Oh, girls, if you could see their faces change when Rachel sings, you would not think of anything else. She never sang at the first church as she does there. It is a revelation to see how she moves those rough looking people, and makes a new soul shine out of their almost animal faces. And they are not all repulsive; some of the young girls are really pretty. Dr. West directed my attention to one of them. She was one he had known since her childhood. And for some time she had been falling into bad ways. She came every night to listen to the singing, but sat or stood far back in the crowd. Last Saturday night she came forward and I got a chance to speak with her. Younger than we are, girls! Oh, it was heart-breaking to see her. No one could doubt the sincerity of her desire to escape her evil life. I resolved to keep watch over her, and was just starting out to visit her.

MAUD.—I'll tell you, girls. Let's go slumming with Virginia, instead of going for a drive!

ALICE.—Say we do! I've never been down to the Rectangle. I've heard it's an awful wicked place,—and lots to see. Virginia will act as guide and it will be real f—interesting.

VIRGINIA.—(*Angry, but controlling herself.*) Very well. I will go with you. (*Rises.*) But you must obey my orders.

MRS. PAGE.—Virginia! What are you thinking of?

DOROTHY.—(*Laughs nervously.*) If we go we ought to take a policeman. It really isn't safe there you know.

VIRGINIA.—There is no danger.

MRS. PAGE.—Dorothy is quite right. It is not a proper place for young ladies.

VIRGINIA.—A good many young girls have to live there.

MRS. PAGE.—That has nothing to do with it. Girls, don't go!

MAUD.—O yes, we must. I wouldn't miss it for anything. If Dorothy is afraid she can stay here.

DOROTHY.—Oh, no! I'll go if the rest of you do.

ALICE.—Indeed, we *are* going. Come on, girls. Don't worry about Virginia, Madam Page. We'll bring her back all right. Good bye!

ALL.—Good bye.

VIRGINIA.—Good bye, Mrs. Winslow, I'm sorry I have to go

MRS. WINSLOW, MRS. PAGE.—Good bye. (*Exeunt.*)

(*Mrs. Page and Mrs. Winslow turn and look at each other as though feeling too much for words. Sigh and shake their heads.*)

MRS. PAGE.—Now, why did Virginia do that? Of course it was pure curiosity on the part of the girls. I wonder she was willing to gratify it.

MRS. WINSLOW.—I suppose she is like Rachel,—always seeing an opportunity in the most absurd things.

MRS. PAGE.—I wouldn't be a bit surprised if Virginia brought home some of those Rectangle people, some time.

MRS. WINSLOW.—(*Laughing.*) Oh, I guess not, Mrs. Page.

MRS. PAGE.—Well, I don't know. I am prepared for anything. She is getting to be a rank socialist. It is a great trial to me. Eccentricity is such bad form.

MRS. WINSLOW.—I suppose the spirit of the pledge is all right, —but it is so impractical. How can people apply any such rule to nineteenth century conditions?

MRS. PAGE.—That's what I say. Just see what it has led Mr. Powers into. Now nobody need tell me *that* was right.

MRS. WINSLOW.—No, indeed! See the suffering he has brought on his family. I am so sorry for Mrs. Powers and Celia, I don't know what to do.

MRS. PAGE.—Just think of it! A family brought up in luxury, every whim gratified, and then in a moment plunged into poverty for a mere fanatical notion.

MRS. WINSLOW.—It's simply terrible. No man has a right to do it. His family has the first claim.

MRS. PAGE.—Yes, that is what I think. I went over to see her a few days ago. She is completely prostrated.

MRS. WINSLOW.—Poor thing! What are the family going to do?

MRS. PAGE.—Oh, I don't suppose they will starve. He says he can support them at his old occupation as a telegraph operator.

MRS. WINSLOW.—But in such a different fashion.

MRS. PAGE.—Yes, she says Mr. Powers must move away from Raymond for she cannot bear it here. Of course their changed conditions would make no difference with us but it would with many people.

MRS. WINSLOW.—And even if she was received everywhere as before, she would not be happy. She would have to live so differently. Well, well, I am sorry for them. How can it be right for a man to force anything like that on his family?

MRS. PAGE.—It is *not* right,—little short of criminal, I say. And then there is Mr. Norman. I am glad he has no family to suffer from his folly. He is sacrificing his whole fortune to a perfectly insane idea. He was a wealthy man. And now look at him.

MRS. WINSLOW.—(*Nods approvingly.*) Yes, Mr. Wright told me yesterday he feared Mr. Norman would be unable to pay the operating expenses of his paper much longer.

MRS. PAGE.—Indeed, I did not think it was quite so bad as that.

MRS. WINSLOW.—Mr. Wright says it is not altogether in his newspaper business that he has lost money or rather thrown it away. He has applied his pledge to all his business enterprises with the same disastrous result. He says if he can gain the election on the saloon question, he will be satisfied to lose his fortune.

MRS. PAGE.—Well, I am not at all sure he will do that. Many of our best people believe in high license, and I rather think I do. —(*Enter West from hall.*)

WEST.—What's that you think, auntie? How do you do, Mrs. Winslow. (*Shakes hands.*) It's a dangerous disease,—this thinking. There is no knowing what it may lead to. When did you feel the first symptom? (*Looks serious and feels her pulse. Sits on stool.*)

MRS. PAGE.—(*Pulls his ear.*) Reginald, you're a simpleton! You have no respect for your old auntie.

WEST.—That's all right. I see the case is not serious. Where's Virginia?

MRS. PAGE.—Gone down to the Rectangle, and goodness only knows what we may expect when she comes back. I live in daily fear of having the house filled with Rectangle people.

WEST.—(*Soothingly.*) There, there, auntie. I don't believe Virginia will put them in your rooms, and you can have your meals sent up. You needn't eat with them.

MRS. PAGE.—You needn't laugh, Reginald. It's no laughing matter. I believe you are all crazy.

WEST.—I am afraid you have been thinking, after all. Don't do it any more. I really can't be responsible for the consequences. (*To Mrs. Winslow.*) Did Rachel go?

MRS. WINSLOW.—No. She went home before Virginia left. I do not think she was going.

MRS. PAGE.—Do you really think, Reginald, that it is the proper thing for the girls to go to the Rectangle alone?

WEST.—It's safe enough in the day time. I would rather not have them go alone at night. (*Ladies both look shocked.*)

MRS. WINSLOW.—Oh, no, indeed! Why, I am afraid to have Rachel go with all you men. I really don't feel easy from the time she goes till she is back again.

WEST.—Yes, we are afraid for our own girls, but think of the young girls *there*, not only without protection but forced into degradation and sin. Auntie, if that thinking disease attacks you again, let it run in that direction.

MRS. PAGE.—Oh, I think of lots of things you don't give me credit for.

WEST.—(*Pats her arm affectionately.*) So Virginia has gone? That was my errand. One of the young girls she was interested in has got into trouble. I wondered if she would go down and see her. I just came from there.

MRS. WINSLOW.—If you didn't spend half your time in the Rectangle without pay, you might be a rich man, Dr. West.

WEST.—What would riches be, compared with the experience I get down there! Pure selfishness, my dear lady. When I attend anybody in the Rectangle, you had better believe there's something the matter with them. And their quarrels give me a chance to operate on every part of their bodies. But I must not linger in your charming society, ladies. Fare thee well. (*Exit West.*)

MRS. PAGE, MRS. WINSLOW.—Good bye.

MRS. PAGE.—I am very fond of Reginald, but he is as crazy as the rest of them. I never would have thought of his taking part in those Rectangle meetings.

MRS. WINSLOW.—Nor I. I used to think him almost sacrilegious.

MRS. PAGE.—He was at times. It used to trouble me a good deal. Why can't people be reasonable. Atheism isn't respectable, neither is fanaticism.

MRS. WINSLOW.—I don't think he is an atheist. Rachel says he is an agnostic.

MRS. PAGE.—(*Shaking her head.*) Very little difference and both very bad form. I believe in religion, but not fanaticism. Don't you think there has been a great change in Mr. Maxwell's sermons since the pledge taking?

MRS. WINSLOW.—Yes. Not nearly as finished in style. But they *are* very earnest. I believe they make one think more. I have heard a good many say so.

MRS. PAGE.—I don't believe in a minister mixing himself up in politics and business. We don't go to church to be informed on such affairs. Let him preach the gospel.

MRS. WINSLOW.—Of course. We go to church to hear about spiritual things, not the affairs of our daily life.

MRS. PAGE.—It's my opinion they have no right to preach social reform or politics from the pulpit. I for one am tired of hearing about politics, tenement houses, and saloons every Sunday.

MRS. WINSLOW.—(*Gives a little laugh.*) He does talk about them a good deal.

MRS. PAGE.—Well, I know one thing. If things go on as they have been lately, I shall not be able to stand it. I shall leave the town.

MRS. WINSLOW.—Oh, Mrs. Page! I hope you won't do that. We should miss you dreadfully.

MRS. PAGE.—(*With lofty humility.*) Oh, I have no influence with anyone. I used to think I had. Virginia doesn't pay the slightest attention to my wishes.

MRS. WINSLOW.—Yes, I know the girls are very trying just now, but I think they will get over this fad in a little while and be more reasonable. I hope Virginia will get back safely.

MRS. PAGE.—O yes, I think so, but I have an uneasy feeling all the time as if some dreadful thing was going to happen.

MRS. WINSLOW.—I think they will get over this notion soon; it is just a novelty. They will soon tire of it,—and become more reasonable. I really must go. (*Rises.*) I had no idea of staying so long.

MRS. PAGE.—Come over again soon, Mrs. Winslow. I have enjoyed talking with you so much.

MRS. WINSLOW.—Yes, I will. Don't think of going away. I should be so sorry. (*Both ladies walk toward the door.*)

MRS. PAGE.—I only think of it when Virginia is particularly exasperating. I cannot understand her in the least lately.

MRS. WINSLOW.—It is hard, but we must be patient. Well, good bye—come over soon.

MRS. PAGE.—Yes, I will. Good bye. (*Exit Mrs. Winslow. Mrs. Page returns to her chair, picks up her work, adjusts her spectacles, and begins to sew. An unusual noise is heard in the hall. She rises. Virginia and Loreen appear in doorway.*)

VIRGINIA.—This way, Loreen. I am taking you home.

LOREEN.—(*Wrenching away and coming down C.*) You shall not touch me! Leave me! Let me go to hell!

VIRGINIA.—(*Following.*) Loreen, you do not belong to Hell; you belong to Jesus. Come.

LOREEN.—(*Turning away.*) No. The devil's waiting for me. See! There he is!

VIRGINIA.—(*Placing hands on her shoulders.*) You do not belong to him, you belong to Jesus. Come. (*Loreen puts her head on Virginia's shoulder and bursts into tears.*) Grandmother, I have brought one of my friends from the Rectangle. She has no home and I am going to care for her a little while.

MRS. PAGE.—(*Standing rigid with astonishment; speaks with difficulty.*) Did you say—she was—one of your friends?

VIRGINIA.—Yes, I said so.

MRS. PAGE.—You have picked up some strange friends. Do you know what this girl is?

VIRGINIA.—She is an outcast, grandmother. I know it even better than you do. She is drunk this minute.

(*Loreen breaks away from Virginia and goes toward Mrs. Page singing, "Just as I am without one plea." Madam Page retreats to right of library table. Virginia comes from behind and puts her arm around Loreen.*)

VIRGINIA.—Will you please ring? I must take her upstairs.

MRS. PAGE.—You shall not do this, Virginia! It is outrageous, unheard of, might easily cost us our standing in society (*Virginia lets Loreen sink into the arm chair.*)

VIRGINIA.—I will bear all that society may do or say. Society is not my God. By the side of this poor soul I count the verdict of society as nothing. (*Rings bell at L.*)

MRS. PAGE.—(*Following to C.*) It would be demoralizing to have her in the house. She is the very scum of the earth.

VIRGINIA.—(*Returning to C.*) She is also a child of God. I have seen her on her knees repentant and have seen hell reach out its horrible fingers after her again. I must do what I can for her.

MRS. PAGE.—But it is not necessary to keep her here.

VIRGINIA.—Grandmother, we call ourselves Christians. (*Gesture of appeal.*) Here is a poor lost human creature without a home, slipping back into a life of misery and shame, and we have more than enough.

MRS. PAGE.—Send her to the asylum for helpless women. Pay all expenses, but for the sake of our reputation don't shelter her here. (*Enter Mary R. Gazes at Loreen with disgust and horror.*)

VIRGINIA.—Mary! Call up Dr. West. Ask him to come here as soon as possible. Tell James to come here at once and Jennie to go to the front chamber to assist me there. (*Exit Mary.*) Grandmother, I do not wish to do anything displeasing to you, but I shall keep Loreen here tonight, and longer, if I think best.

MRS. PAGE.—Then you can answer for the consequences. I do not stay in the same house with a miserable—

VIRGINIA.—(*Stopping her with a gesture.*) Grandmother, this house is mine. It is your home as long as you choose to remain. But in this matter, I shall act as I fully believe Jesus would in my place. (*Bends over Loreen.*)

MRS. PAGE.—Then I shall not remain. (*Goes to door and then returns.*) You can always remember that you have driven your grandmother out of your house in favor of a drunken woman. (*Virginia stands upright and watches her go out, and then turns to Loreen. James enters, comes down and stares at Loreen.*)

VIRGINIA.—Take hold of her arm and help me take her up stairs. (*James does not move and continues to stare.*) Do as I tell you. (*James stretches out his arm and timidly takes hold of Loreen. She leans heavily on Virginia and they go out.*)

Curtain.

ACT III.

Scene same as Act II. Virginia seated in arm chair, reading. Time is early evening; an electric lamp is lighted on the table. Rollin more dignified and serious than in Act II enters from hall.

ROLLIN.—(*Coming down.*) Well, the News is secure anyway. If Mr. Norman loses all his subscribers, he can still thunder away on the side of righteousness for some time.

VIRGINIA.—(*Coming toward him.*) All the details attended to? I am so glad that business is disposed of.

ROLLIN.—(*Pretending to be serious.*) You have disposed of half a million dollars very easily. At this rate your superfluous money will soon cease to trouble you.

VIRGINIA.—(*Anxiously.*) You still think it was a wise thing to do?

ROLLIN.—(*Laughs.*) I'm afraid I am rather envious. (*Regretfully.*) But of course a fellow who has been as extravagant as I have for the last few years, couldn't endow a paper like Norman's.

VIRGINIA.—(*They go to couch and sit down.*) You did the next best thing, helped me to see the opportunity. You are a great help to me, Rollin.

ROLLIN.—It is time I was of some use. I have been a worthless careless fellow all my life.

VIRGINIA.—You are no longer. I have regrets for time lost and money wasted, but don't let's think of that. What shall we do next?

ROLLIN.—(*More cheerfully.*) I think we can manage the Rect-angle scheme.

VIRGINIA.—(*Meditatively.*) I fear I will not have money enough; now I have put so much in the paper.

ROLLIN.—Well, your humble servant hasn't quite pauperized himself. He might dig up three or four hundred thousand.

VIRGINIA.—(*Delighted.*) And do it together? How splendid! I had no idea when Mr. Norman advised me to get that land what use I would make of it.

ROLLIN.—Just what you need for settlement purposes! And you got it in the nick of time. You could sell it now for three times what you paid for it.

VIRGINIA.—Sell it! No money could buy it. When can we begin a house?

ROLLIN.—(*Laughs.*) I suppose we will have to see about plans first.

VIRGINIA.—I'll see an architect tomorrow. (*Gets up and crosses to R. as though too excited to keep still. Turns suddenly toward Rollin.*) It is not right, Rollin. We get nothing but pleasure out of everything, and there is so much misery in the world. It seems selfish to be as happy as I am, now you are in such perfect sympathy with me, and Loreen is doing so nicely.

ROLLIN.—(*Stretches out on couch.*) How about the day you brought Loreen home, with everybody on the boulevard staring at you and grandmother so angry? You were not very happy. Doubted if you had done a wise thing, didn't you?

VIRGINIA.—(*Picks up work from work table and seats herself in rocker.*) It is true. I did wonder if I had used good judgment, but I acted as I thought my pledge required and the result has justified me, though it troubles me even now to think that in a way I turned grandmother out.

ROLLIN.—You are too sensitive about that. Grandmother is independently wealthy, and able to live wherever she pleases. She had a delightful trip with the Wrights last summer. Now she is much happier in the south with her brother than here under the changed conditions, and you are free to live the life you think right.

VIRGINIA.—It does me so much good to talk things over with you, Rollin: Some of our pledge-takers get no sympathy whatever from their own families.

ROLLIN.—Poor Powers! His wife and daughter have made things anything but pleasant for him.

VIRGINIA.—I was thinking of him when I said we were too happy. Think of the sacrifice he made!

ROLLIN.—(*Sits up and speaks energetically.*) Celia and her mother care absolutely nothing about his motives or the great service he rendered the state. The loss of their money and social position was everything to them.

VIRGINIA.—And it was such a splendid thing. I would have been proud of him if he had been my father; I would not have minded if he dug ditches and I had to scrub floors.

ROLLIN.—(*Laughing, gets up and walks.*) I cannot quite imagine either you or Celia scrubbing floors. Any way, I am glad no one has made it necessary in your case.

VIRGINIA.—Mr. Powers has brought no *real* hardship on his family. They will not suffer except through their foolish pride.

ROLLIN.—Of course not. I was only laughing a little at your excitement.

VIRGINIA.—And then there is Rachel. Her mother has never quite forgiven her for refusing the concert offer. (*Rollin goes R of table and fingers a book.*) It is very hard for her. She is going to give lessons in the city and let the people in the Rectangle have the benefit of her voice.

ROLLIN.—(*Indifferently.*) Is she?

VIRGINIA.—She is really sacrificing a brilliant musical career to give her whole life to the people!

ROLLIN.—(*Stiffly.*) Certainly a very good example of self sacrifice.

VIRGINIA.—But don't you think it a very unusual example?

ROLLIN.—Perhaps so. (*Turns his back and goes to bookcase.*)

VIRGINIA.—Rollin, why do you treat her in such a distant, precise manner? You used to be on easy terms. (*Rollin does not reply. Virginia watches him a moment and a new thought seems to come to her. She goes to him and puts her hand on his arm.*) Forgive me, Rollin, if I have given you pain. I did not know—I thought—(*Looks earnestly at him.*)

ROLLIN.—(*Puts his arm around her and they walk down center.*) So you never guessed my secret? I asked Rachel to be my wife that day we talked about her refusal to join the opera troupe. (*Stops suddenly*)

VIRGINIA.—I don't understand. I was sure she—

ROLLIN.—(*Interrupting.*) She refused,—said I had no purpose in life, which was true enough. Now I *have* a purpose, now I *am* a new man, don't you see, Virginia, how impossible it is for me to say anything?

VIRGINIA.—No, Rollin, why?

ROLLIN.—I went to the Rectangle meetings at first to see and hear her, and yet, I can honestly say, that on that night the world was made over for me, I never thought of her voice except as God's message.

VIRGINIA.—Do you still love her, Rollin?

ROLLIN.—Better than ever, but I think she can never love me.

VIRGINIA.—I don't know about that. I cannot think of two people better fitted for each other.

ROLLIN.—*She does not think so.*

VIRGINIA.—You are a man now,—very different from the careless boy you were six months ago.

ROLLIN.—If it is so, the thought of winning her had nothing to do with the change. I cannot let it appear so to her.

VIRGINIA.—Rachel is too just and clear sighted not to know the truth. I wish you would try to be perfectly natural with her as you used to be.

ROLLIN.—I don't mean to avoid her, but I cannot seek occasions for meeting her. It would destroy my self control.

VIRGINIA.—(*Takes both his hands in hers pleadingly.*) Rollin!

ROLLIN.—(*Smiles but shakes his head.*) Thank you, dear, for your kind wishes, but it is no use. I can do nothing. I will go down town now and see if there is any election news. I'll return soon. (*Exit.*)

(*Virginia seats herself in arm chair and picks up her book, but lets it drop idly in her lap and seems to be thinking deeply. Loreen appears at R. D. simply but tastefully dressed.*)

LOREEN.—Is there anything else I can do, Miss Virginia?

VIRGINIA.—I don't think of anything else just now. Come in, dear, and let us talk awhile. (*Loreen enters and Virginia reaches out her hand and draws her to a low seat beside her.*) You are so untiring it is difficult to keep you employed, but I am going into some new work and there will be plenty for you. I shall have to be careful you do not do too much. I fear you are not very strong even yet. (*Looks at her affectionately.*)

LOREEN.—(*Looks at Virginia adoringly.*) Oh, I am strong now, Miss Virginia, and if I can do anything that will really help you I shall be so glad. You only let me work now to make me feel myself useful.

VIRGINIA.—(*Laughing.*) You are a terribly sharp-sighted little person, Loreen, but you do a great deal for me that you don't know anything about.

LOREEN.—Oh, Miss Virginia! I can do nothing—nothing for you who have done everything for me.

VIRGINIA.—Listen, dear. You have done more for me than I have ever done for you.

LOREEN.—What can you mean? You took me in all my sin and filth and misery into your own home. You put me in that lovely room. I didn't know there was such a place in the world. There was a beautiful picture of Christ walking on the sea. I think if it had not been for that picture I should have run away as soon as I could. The sad, beautiful eyes seemed to hold me till I got a little used to this wonderful new place. Then you nursed me and watched over me till I loved you so I could not leave you. Oh, what could I ever do for you like that?

VIRGINIA.—But living in a fine house and sleeping in a beautiful room is not the best, Loreen.

LOREEN.—No—no—You have been my friend. You have taught me to say it. You woke me up to another life. When I think of what I was—what you saved me from—Oh my friend! (*Drops her head in Virginia's lap.*)

VIRGINIA.—(*Puts her arms around her.*) Yes, Loreen, you are my friend; and you have waked me up to a new life, also. When I think of what I was a year ago, I loathe myself. I was the most selfish, useless, wicked person in the world. And there was no excuse for me, as there was so abundantly for you.

LOREEN.—Hush, hush—I cannot hear you say that.

VIRGINIA.—No—no—We will not talk of the past any more. Let us look to the future. I have some great plans in my head that you are largely responsible for, Loreen.

LOREEN.—(*Incredulously.*) How can that be?

VIRGINIA.—You have told me so much about life and conditions in the Rectangle that the plans formed themselves.

LOREEN.—Can you tell me of them?

VIRGINIA.—Yes, indeed, for you are to help me carry them out. (*Door bell rings.*)

LOREEN (*Most delightedly.*) Oh, can I?

RACHEL.—(*Speaking to James in hall*): I will find her, James. (*In doorway.*) Am I intruding?

VIRGINIA.—(*Going to meet her as she comes down center.*) No, indeed. You can never do that! (*Kisses her, helps her off with jacket and lays it on library table.*)

RACHEL.—No, dear, I will not take off my hat. I can stay only a short time. (*Goes to Loreen who has risen but not advanced to meet her*) How do do, Loreen? (*Takes her hand and puts one arm affectionately around her.*) What a pretty new dress!

LOREEN.—(*Pleased.*) Do you like it?

VIRGINIA.—She made every bit of it herself. Didn't she do well?

RACHEL.—I should think so! I would be as proud as a peacock if I could do it.

VIRGINIA.—I am so glad you came, Rachel. I was just about to tell Loreen of some new plans Rollin and I have made.

RACHEL.—Oh, tell us quick. I love new plans.

VIRGINIA.—Some time ago I bought a block of land in the Rectangle, simply because it was cheap, and I thought it a good investment. In the last six months it has increased greatly in value.

RACHEL.—Then it *was* a good investment?

VIRGINIA.—One of the best I ever made. It's so valuable I don't believe anyone has money enough to buy it.

RACHEL.—Virginia! How can land in the Rectangle be worth so much.

VIRGINIA.—(*Laughs.*) Only because it is worth so much to me. I have a use for it. Rollin and I are going to start settlement houses there. It is the very spot.

RACHEL.—But Virginia! It will take a fortune and you have just put so much into the News!

VIRGINIA.—I have about \$450,000 I can put into it and Rollin has as much more.

RACHEL.—(*With gesture of astonishment.*) It will mean your entire fortune!

VIRGINIA.—Can you think of any place where it is more needed?

RACHEL.—No, but you take my breath away.

VIRGINIA.—I don't want to do that for I have your work all laid out for you.

RACHEL.—Oh, I'll sing at all your social functions,—never fear.

VIRGINIA.—You are to do more than sing, Rachel; you are to make singers. We will have a musical institute and you shall be the head.

RACHEL.—(*Slowly.*) What a magnificent scheme!

VIRGINIA.—You shall have everything,—the best instruments money can buy. What cannot be done with music to win souls into a purer, higher living!

RACHEL.—Yes, yes. What an opportunity! I will gladly give my whole life to it. What a delight it will be. (*Loreen has been listening intently but looks sad and discouraged. Rachel turns to her.*) Isn't it splendid, Loreen? How we shall enjoy it.

LOREEN.—(*Sadly.*) I have no money and I don't know anything. I can't do anything. (*The girls go and put their arms around her.*)

VIRGINIA.—Yes, you can, dear. Something much more important than even Rachel's music.

LOREEN.—(*Amazed.*) What can you mean?

VIRGINIA.—Rachel, do you know, Loreen has a perfect genius for cooking? Mary has taken her in hand, and she says Loreen surpasses her teacher. We have had eatable proof of that.

RACHEL.—Yes, indeed! Wasn't I here to lunch last week?

VIRGINIA.—It's no small talent, let me tell you, Loreen.

LOREEN.—I love to cook things you like, but I did so hope I could help in your Rectangle plans.

VIRGINIA.—Indeed you shall. We will have a school of domestic science. And you shall teach them to cook. Half the sins and ills of humanity are due to bad cooking.

LOREEN.—I can see now, how the folks in the Rectangle waste and spoil their food. I *could* help them, couldn't I?

VIRGINIA.—And you shall have a model kitchen, just as perfect in its way as Rachel's conservatory.

RACHEL.—O girls, it is just like a story book. When can we begin? (*They join hands and swing around gaily.*)

VIRGINIA.—I am going to see an architect tomorrow, and we will begin building as soon as possible. (*Stops suddenly.*) Oh, if it were not for those saloons! Sometimes it seems as though it were no use so long as they are there.

RACHEL.—(*Sitting in arm chair.*) It is election day. Do you suppose there is any chance we will win?

VIRGINIA.—(*Brings rocker down C.*) Rollin says the chances are so even no one can possibly forecast the outcome.

LOREEN.—(*At sewing table.*) Do you think there will ever come a time when there will be no saloons in the Rectangle?

VIRGINIA.—Yes, I believe the time must come. We will never quit the fight until it does.

LOREEN.—I cannot think of the Rectangle without saloons.

VIRGINIA.—We may not clear them out this time, but we will do it in time. We must do it.

RACHEL.—Mr. Norman's paper has had a greater influence on this election than any before, even if he has lost subscribers and money.

VIRGINIA.—Yes. We couldn't afford to lose the News. I shouldn't have thought it worth while to start the work in the Rectangle if we didn't have Mr. Norman to fight the saloons.

LOREEN.—I am afraid sometimes of the enemies you may make down there.

VIRGINIA.—We have all been afraid or indifferent too long, or things would not be so bad as they are.

RACHEL.—Are we going to have a meeting tonight?

VIRGINIA.—Why, yes, I suppose so—I don't know.—(*Enter Rollin R. E.*)

ROLLIN.—Good evening, Miss Winslow. (*Shakes hands.*)

VIRGINIA.—Are we, Rollin?

ROLLIN.—Are we what?

VIRGINIA.—Going to have a meeting tonight?

ROLLIN.—(*Standing near library table.*) Yes, I was just speaking with Mr. Maxwell. He has decided to hold one.

RACHEL.—Do you know how the election is going?

ROLLIN.—No. It is a little early yet.

VIRGINIA.—(*Rising.*) It will soon be time to go. Rachel, please excuse me for a few minutes. Loreen and I have something to attend to.

RACHEL.—(*Rising.*) I think I will go now. Dr. West always calls for me.

VIRGINIA.—He is coming here tonight and we can all go together. It will save time.

RACHEL.—(*Hesitates.*) I think perhaps I better go.

VIRGINIA.—You would only get home and have to come right back again. (*Gently forces her back in her chair.*) Rollin will entertain you while we are gone. (*Takes Loreen by hand and goes out. Rollin and Rachel seem embarrassed. Slight pause. Rachel takes magazine from table and fingers it. Rollin seats himself in rocker.*)

ROLLIN.—I suppose Virginia has been talking over her Rectangle plans with you?

RACHEL.—Yes, it's magnificent. It's a tremendous undertaking, but she talks about it so confidently she must have studied over it a good deal.

ROLLIN.—She knows more about Arnold Foynbee and East-End London and institutional church work than many professional slum workers. She spends nearly all her time in getting information. (*Another slight pause. Rachel turns her magazine and finally seems to make an effort.*)

RACHEL.—I—I was so glad when Virginia said you had taken our pledge.

ROLLIN.—It is time I was pledged to something good. (*Another slight pause.*)

RACHEL.—Doesn't our mutual pledge give me a right to ask about your work?

ROLLIN.—Yes, certainly. You are very kind to be interested. I have been busy.

RACHEL.—I have seen so little of you. Tell me something of your work.

ROLLIN.—I have been trying to lead the men I know to a better life.

RACHEL.—The Club men? We don't usually think of them as people who need help.

ROLLIN.—That's just it. We look somewhat after the poor wretches in the Rectangle; we make some effort to reach the working men; we send missionaries to the heathen, but the club men are left out.

RACHEL.—(*Smiling.*) So you took an unoccupied field.

ROLLIN.—Yes. Unoccupied, but familiar. I am not fitted to reach Rectangle people. I don't know how, but I know these club men,—their good and bad qualities—I am one of them. When I asked myself, as you did, "What would Jesus do?" that was my answer—also my cross.

RACHEL.—(*After a slight pause.*) How do you approach your old acquaintances? What do they say?

ROLLIN.—(*Smiles.*) Oh, it depends on the man. A good many think I am a crank.

RACHEL.—Are they willing to talk with you?

ROLLIN.—Oh yes! They don't fight shy of me, and I try not to provoke unnecessary criticism.

RACHEL.—Great tact must be needed. Have you succeeded in changing the views of any of them.

ROLLIN.—Yes, some of the young men have given up drinking and other bad habits, and I have interested some of them in our work in the Rectangle. They will give money and personal help.

RACHEL.—(*After slight pause, playing with magazine eyes downcast.*) Do you remember I reproached you once for not having any purpose worth living for? I want to say—(*raises her eyes.*) I must say in justice to you now—I honor you for your courage and obedience to the pledge as you interpret it. The life you are now leading is a very noble one.

ROLLIN.—I thank you. It is worth more to me than I can tell to hear you say that.

RACHEL.—It is only simple justice. I am afraid my feeling at that time was rather pharisaical. (*Timidly.*) Can you forgive me?

ROLLIN.—(*Rising.*) Rachel! (*Reaches out both hands. She rises and puts hers in them.*) Rachel—do you mean—can you mean you may sometime learn to love me? (*Her face answers him and he puts his arm around her.*)

RACHEL.—I don't believe I shall have to learn—

(*Virginia comes to R. E. with hat and cloak on, starts and turns to leave but Rollin who is facing that way calls.*)

ROLLIN.—Virginia! Come and give us your blessing.

VIRGINIA.—Rachel, you darling! (*Kisses her*) I don't think I can love you any better than I always have, but it will be sweet to have a sister. Rollin! (*Puts her arms around his neck, and kisses him.*) It is the only thing needed to make me perfectly happy.

ROLLIN.—I guess you will have to bear it, Virginia. I don't believe Rachel and I can scare up a quarrel even to furnish you with a hardship.

VIRGINIA.—I am afraid I am perfectly satisfied to be happy. How happy we will be, and how much we can do working all together. (*Enter West from hall.*)

WEST.—(*Coming down center.*) Good evening, every body. (*Puts his arm around Virginia, shakes hands with Rachel and speaks to Rollin.*) Going to have a meeting tonight? (*Rollin and Rachel L. C. Virginia C.*)

ROLLIN.—Yes. That was the latest decision.

WEST.—(*Back to library table, hands on table.*) Well I do not believe it wise. The people at the Rectangle are drunk crazy.

RACHEL.—I thought the saloons were to be closed.

WEST.—They were, but the order has not been enforced. I really don't like the idea of taking the ladies tonight, Rollin.

ROLLIN.—I was inclined to feel that way but Mr. Maxwell thought the usual meeting would have a quieting effect.

WEST.—I'm afraid not. They are very angry at the thought of closing the saloons, and know the First Church is largely responsible for the campaign. I fear our presence may exasperate them still more.

ROLLIN.—I thought I ought to trust Mr. Maxwell's judgment—but—(*Looks doubtfully at Rachel.*)

RACHEL.—Oh it is too late to back out now. Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell will be there, and we must not fail them.

WEST.—Mrs. Maxwell will not be there. The little girl is not well.

VIRGINIA.—Well, anyway we must go. So much depends on the singing, they would be quite lost without Rachel.

WEST.—Well, if we're going, it is time. Better be there early.

VIRGINIA.—I will get Loreen. (*Exit R. E.*)

RACHEL.—How Loreen has improved in the last few months. But it is not to be wondered at. No one could live intimately with Virginia and not be made over.

ROLLIN.—Not if they adored her as Loreen does. I think she would gladly lay down her life for Virginia.

WEST.—Easier said than done, my boy. But I don't wonder she loves Virginia. I do myself. Here they come. (*Enter Virginia and Loreen. Rachel picks up her coat. Rollin helps her on with it. West shakes hands with Loreen.*)

WEST.—We must go at once. (*Rachel and Rollin start off together at D. C. West turns with a comical expression to Virginia, speaks behind his hand.*) Have I lost my job? (*Virginia nods and smiles happily and all go out. The stage is vacant for a short space. Mary enters at R. E. and begins to arrange furniture. James comes in from D. C.*)

MARY.—I don't think they ought to have had a meeting to-night. Everybody knows how those Rectangle folks act on election night and they say it'll be worse than ever this year.

JAMES.—Yes. They are awful mad at the toffs. Think they're trying to take away all their pleasure.

MARY.—Oh, dear! I wish Miss Virginia had stayed at home. They hadn't ought to have let her gone.

JAMES.—Well, they've gone anyway, and Mr. Rollin and Miss Rachel wasn't thinking of anything disagreeable I can tell you—(*Nods and winks mysteriously.*)

MARY.—Whatever do you mean? I used to think Mr. Rollin was sweet on her, but lately they've been as stiff as two sticks.

JAMES.—No two sticks tonight! He looked at her as though she was taffy and he wanted to eat her.

MARY.—(*Incredulously.*) No!

JAMES.—Yes! It just made me think I wish you'd look at me like that.

MARY.—Well, I won't. Haven't I told you so often enough?

JAMES.—Well, you might change your mind. They did. (*Tries to put his arm around her.*)

MARY.—Oh, you silly—off with you.

JAMES.—Well, I'll make love to Loreen then. She's mighty nice looking.

MARY.—She won't have anything to say to you. She's got too much sense.

JAMES.—How long since? Remember the day she came? You were mad enough then. And the Madam! Oh my! (*Laughs heartily.*)

MARY.—I know I was, but I can't help liking her now. She's so kind and anxious to help everybody. And have you noticed how different she speaks—so gentle and quiet and proper, just like Miss Virginia. And cookin! I have to take a back seat.

JAMES.—I think I see you.

MARY.—Not that you would ever know it from her. She's that humble and it's "Mary says so" and "Mary does so" and "Mary taught me this." I spose I did learn her some things, but cooks, like poets, is born, not made.

JAMES.—I see! Brother—no, sister artists. (*Bell rings and James goes to answer it. Mary also goes into hall. Mrs. Winslow's voice is heard in hall.*) "Oh, James, isn't she here?" (*Enter Mrs. Winslow followed by James and Mary.*)

JAMES.—No, Mrs. Winslow. She went with the others to the Rectangle.

MRS. WINSLOW.—(*Sinks into chair at L. C.*) Oh it isn't possible they went tonight! The idea of taking those girls to the Rectangle election night.

MARY.—That's what I said, Mrs. Winslow. I have been so worried. (*Enter Jenny D. C.*)

MRS. WINSLOW.—She did not come home, or I should certainly have forbidden it. Oh, James, do you think anything will happen to them?

JAMES.—(*Soothingly.*) Oh, no! I guess not, Mrs. Winslow. There's Jenny. *She's* just been out.

MRS. WINSLOW.—Oh Jenny! - Where have you been?

JENNY.—(*Coming down center.*) I started to go home.

MARY.—What's the matter? Why are you back?

JENNY.—I got frightened.

MRS. WINSLOW.—Oh Jenny! What was the trouble?

JENNY.—You know I have to go by the worst saloon in the Rectangle. They were having an awful row. You could hear them for blocks away.

MRS. WINSLOW.—Oh! That's just where they go!

JENNY.—They never could have gone to the tent tonight for I started only a little later than they did and the way was blocked.

JAMES.—Tell us about it, Jen—Did you go clear down?

JENNY.—I went down far enough to see the crowd. They were throwing mud and stones and shouting. The women were as bad or worse than the men. I heard one cry "Down with the aristocrats." Then I heard a woman scream, and someone threw a bottle out of the second story in that saloon on the corner. That frightened me and I turned and ran.

(*This account is interspersed with ejaculations from her hearers and Mrs. Winslow is hysterical at the close.*)

MRS. WINSLOW.—I don't see how I ever allowed her to go. I ought to have said no at first.

MARY.—(*Walking uneasily.*) Oh, dear! I wish Miss Virginia was here.

JAMES.—Did you come right home, Jen?

JENNY.—No. I stopped a few minutes at Maggie's. Her brother said the crowd surrounded the tent so no one could get in.

JAMES.—If they didn't have a meeting, they ought to be back pretty soon. (*Goes to window L. Jenny follows.*) I don't see what Mr. Rollin was thinking about. He ought to have known those toughs were making lots of threats. I did.

JENNY.—(*Looking out of window.*) It looks as if they were bringing a stretcher up the street. (*Mrs. Winslow screams "Oh" and Mary tries to sooth her. To James.*) Do you see it?

JAMES.—Yes, I see it. Yes, it is.

JENNY.—They are bringing it here.

JAMES.—Yes, right in here. (*Goes out at D. C. Returns in a minute. Moves tables toward R. and L. and clears space of chairs. Goes out again. Enter Maxwell, Rollin, West, and Norman carrying Loreen on stretcher. Virginia and Rachel follow, then James, who joins Jenny at window. They set the stretcher down in middle of stage, head at R. Dr. West at head examines wound. Virginia at back of stretcher bends over her. Mary a little back of her as*

if waiting a chance to be useful. Rollin at foot of stretcher watches West intently. Rachel goes to her mother, who had covered her face as they brought in the stretcher. She talks with her till Maxwell asks "Is it serious," when she joins Rollin at foot of stretcher. Mr. Maxwell and Norman at R. Front talk in low tones.)

MAXWELL.—How did it happen she was hit? Virginia was walking on that side.

NORMAN.—Loreen pushed her away and received the blow.

MAXWELL.—It was terrible. The people were completely crazed with drink and anger.

NORMAN.—Yes. At a false report that we had gained the election.

MAXWELL.—Was it false, then? Have we lost?

NORMAN.—Yes. They had the bulletin out as we came by the News.

MAXWELL.—I feared it and yet I hoped. May God forgive us our long neglect of a plain duty.

NORMAN.—We have been in terrible danger. Miss Winslow would have received blows several times, if Rollin had not managed to ward them off.

MAXWELL.—I blame myself. I should have known a meeting was impossible. Is it very serious, Doctor? *(As West completes his examination and stands up looking down at Loreen. Virginia is kneeling by side of Loreen.)*

WEST.—She is recovering consciousness; but she cannot live.

LOREEN.—*(Very feebly.)* Is—she—safe?

VIRGINIA.—Yes, dear Loreen.—But you—

LOREEN.—I—am—safe—and—happy.

VIRGINIA.—Loreen—oh Loreen—I cannot bear it.

LOREEN.—Do—not—grieve—it is better—so. You—have saved me.—You—will—help—the—others.

VIRGINIA.—Yes, Loreen. The life you have saved shall be devoted to saving others. *(Loreen smiles. Virginia kisses her. She smiles again and dies. Virginia kneels by side of stretcher at back. West with hands at his back stands near head looking down at her. Rollin and Rachel at foot with bowed heads. They stand in silence for a moment. Maxwell and Norman at head. Servants in group a little apart. Mrs. Winslow in chair where Rachel left her.)*

MAXWELL.—*(In low intense tones.)* Only one out of thousands. Oh! Christian America! How long! O Lord God! How long? How long?

Curtain.

EPILOGUE.

FUNERAL OF LOREEN.

Body of Loreen in middle of stage. Pledge-takers, with exception of Powers, seated at back of stage. The Rectangle friends of Loreen in seats in front. When curtain rises the friends (about twenty-five women) of Loreen begin to sing softly "I was a wandering sheep". After a line or two, they rise, each one with a single flower in her hand, and file around the stretcher. They strew the body with flowers and form in two lines that reach to the back door. The last six women carry out Loreen through the lines thus formed. The pledge takers follow, then those in line,—The singing continues till the last one is out. If there is time, and it is thought advisable Rachel may sing "The ninety and nine" before the women begin to sing.

Curtain.

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